

Maryland State Department of Education Division of Certification and Accreditation

Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs

This document is based upon:

- *The Redesign of Teacher Education;*
- *The Quality Teacher Work Group Final Report;*
- *The Proposed Resident Teacher Certificate Revision;*
- *“Alternative Certification Concepts, Maryland Approved Alternative Programs,” developed by Dr. Edward Root, President, State Board of Education; and*
- *The discussion of the State Board of Education - Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board Joint Conference Committee meeting on March 23, 2005.*

Purpose:

The purpose of these guidelines is to meet the Quality Teacher Work Group recommendations 1) for preparing new teachers through Maryland Approved Programs, and 2) for ensuring that initial teacher certification is performance-based. Full implementation of these recommendations will result in the elimination of credit count for initial certification. To achieve this goal, Maryland’s PreK – 20 community must develop innovative and adaptive models of teacher preparation and development. Critical will be the leadership role to be played by four-year institutions as they customize their programs for career changers and sponsor innovative new programs to provide alternative routes to certification and incorporate the Resident teacher Certificate (RTC). Critical also will be the collaborative leadership of Maryland’s two-year and four-year institutions and local school systems.

Overarching Guidelines:

- Approved alternative certification program development and implementation should be consistent with the recommendations of the *Redesign of Teacher Education* (1995), the *Final Report of the Quality Teacher Work Group* (2003), and *No Child Left Behind* (2002).
- Approved alternative certification program development and implementation should be consistent with the recommendation of the Teacher Requirements Study Group (2005) that all paths to initial teacher certification in Maryland should require an internship supervised by an expert classroom teacher. (See Internship/Residency Guidelines below.)

- The full benefit of Maryland Approved Programs, including interstate reciprocity, is available to career changer programs through state-approved alternative certification preparation.
- The standards of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and/or the state Essential Dimensions of Teaching, which align with the INTASC standards, guide program planning, implementation, and assessment.
- Required pre-residency internships are full-time and are intensively supervised by expert teachers or former teachers/administrators who are certificated and experienced in the same subject or specialty area.
- Flexibility between clock hours and credit hours for the internship, including the possibility of combination, may be decided on a program or individual basis. Upper division and graduate credit are only available through four-year institutions.
- Flexibility regarding length of internship and other program requirements is based upon internship structure and design and/or candidates' prior knowledge, skills and experience. (A fuller explanation is provided below in the Guidelines for the Internship/Residency.)
- MSDE approval to local superintendents for issuance of the Resident Teacher Certificate is required for individuals to teach on the RTC and is dependent upon the approved alternative program offered to support the RTC.
- Consistent with the MSDE program approval procedures, all new Maryland Approved Preparation Alternative Programs require MSDE approval. MSDE reviews implementation and performance outcomes of all programs on an ongoing basis, including those in support of the RTC. Program Providers are in the following categories:
 - Local School System: Clock-hour programs with no IHE collaboration or with a non-IHE collaborator; or consortia programs in partnership with IHE(s);
 - Four-Year IHE: Maryland Approved Programs or credit-hour/clock hour programs in partnership with local school systems and/or 2-year IHE(s);
 - Two-Year IHE: Collaboration with local school systems and/or 4-year IHE(s) in providing credit-hour and/or clock-hour content at the freshman/sophomore levels
- Access to approved alternative programs is open to qualified candidates interested in teaching any field or grade level, though promoted particularly to those interested in teaching shortage areas.

Internship Entry Requirements:

- For a Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program using credit-hours, clock hours or combination of both, as a minimum, the following must be present:
 1. Bachelor's degree or higher; and
 2. A grade point average (GPA) in either or both undergraduate or post-baccalaureate course work in an appropriate content concentration/major that meets at least the mean of those required by all Maryland Approved Programs in teacher preparation.
 3. Participation in standards-based pre-employment training that includes Elementary Reading Processes and Acquisitions or Secondary Reading in the Content Areas Part I; and
 4. Praxis I qualifying score or qualifying score on comparable state-approved test of basic skills; and
 5. Praxis II content qualifying score or qualifying score on comparable state-approved content test.

Guidelines for the Internship/Residency:

- Approved alternative preparation programs require an internship lasting from four to eight weeks, the length of which is to be determined based upon a program's pre-employment/internship components and/or the experience of the candidate. Such experience, with documentation verifying comparable teaching knowledge and skills, could include teaching at the higher education level, in business or the military. Note: Though secondary level teaching equivalence is the most likely type of equivalence, internship flexibility may also be applied when certain individuals choose to teach in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, or Special Education and have appropriate grade-level teaching experience.
- Equivalence is determined by the IHE or consortium operating the program, under the guidance, monitoring, and approval of MSDE, with documentation filed at MSDE at the time of completion of requirements.
- Technical assistance is provided by MSDE to support innovative approaches and flexibility in determining internship requirements.
- Internship placement is determined by the local school system. The internship could occur in the internship supervisor's classroom, in the classroom for which the intern will assume responsibility as the resident teacher, or in a summer school program. The internship supervisor could be a currently employed teacher, including a rehired retired teacher or administrator, or some other arrangement could be made with the IHE, the IHE consortium, or the local school system.

- Intensive expert supervision is provided to support development of interns. During the internship, supervision of classroom teaching is provided on a daily basis. Interns also observe the teaching of the supervising teacher as well as other teachers in the school. Features commonly provided in professional development schools, such as interviewing key personnel including administrators, special educators, counselors, pupil personnel workers, social workers, school psychologists, testing coordinators, media specialists, and other specialists; participating in seminars with other professionals or pre-professionals, and participating in before and after school events are available and expected of interns.
- Readiness to move from the internship to the residency required for the RTC is determined through the multiple perspectives of IHE, IHE consortium or other providers, and school personnel. Readiness for the residency results in the award by MSDE of the Resident Teacher Certificate and employment by the Maryland local school system sponsoring the residency.
- For approved alternative programs using the RTC, ongoing support and mentoring are provided throughout the period of employment on the RTC. The type, form, and extent of supports to the RTC teacher are determined and provided through program providers in concert with key personnel in the school.
- Residency requirements for the RTC are made clear to program providers and participants through MSDE documents and technical assistance provided by MSDE. Technical assistance can be arranged regionally to provide general information, as well as targeted to specific groups interested in developing state approved alternative programs.

Transition from RTC to Standard Professional Certificate (SPC) I Requirements:

- Requirements are: Successful completion of program requirements, including remaining reading courses, thorough demonstration to key school representatives and other appropriate stakeholders of standards-based professional performance; Praxis II pedagogy qualifying score; issuance by MSDE of SPC I.

Other Considerations:

- MSDE should encourage IHEs to develop new programs, including those using the RTC, through catalyst grants, as well as direct technical assistance.
- MSDE review teams should look for evidence that program options at IHEs provide “late decider” pathways to certification, as recommended in the *Redesign of Teacher Education*, that may use the RTC component.

- Pay for school-based work during the internship is not discouraged and could be promoted through such arrangements as long term substitute pay or monthly stipends.
- Scholarship funding is available from the State Office of Student Financial Assistance for eligible candidates enrolled in approved programs leading to certification in critical shortage areas.
- Maryland earns national recognition for promising practices in preparing career changers who complete excellent internship/residency programs, and for minimizing obstacles to certification reciprocity with most states.

Review Consideration

These guidelines will be reviewed by the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board between January and March, 2009 to determine their efficacy with regard to candidate participation, program completion, and retention as teachers.

Approved: May, 2005 – Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board; Maryland State Board of Education
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